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THE SCIOTO ORDNANCE PLANT  
and  
THE MARION ENGINEER DEPOT  
of Marion, Ohio

A Profile  
*AFTER FORTY YEARS*

By  
Charles D. Mosher  
and  
Delpha Ruth Mosher

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The Moshers have one daughter and four grandchildren. They live in Marion, Ohio.

## DEDICATION

This Profile of the Scioto Ordnance Plant and the Marion Engineer Depot is dedicated to the men and women who worked there and who put their lives at risk for the war effort. Many of them were injured and four were killed. They all helped win the war.

### Cover Design

The 100,000th bomb produced at  
The Scioto Ordnance Plant  
Maxine Hawk Alban, Twila Delaney Holliday,  
Ruth Stumbo Haubert, Katharine Poorman Stevens

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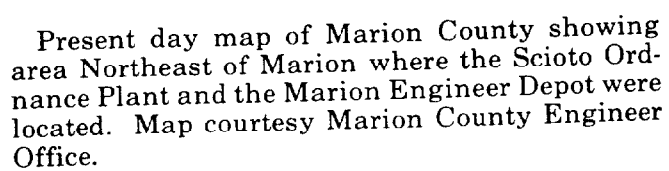
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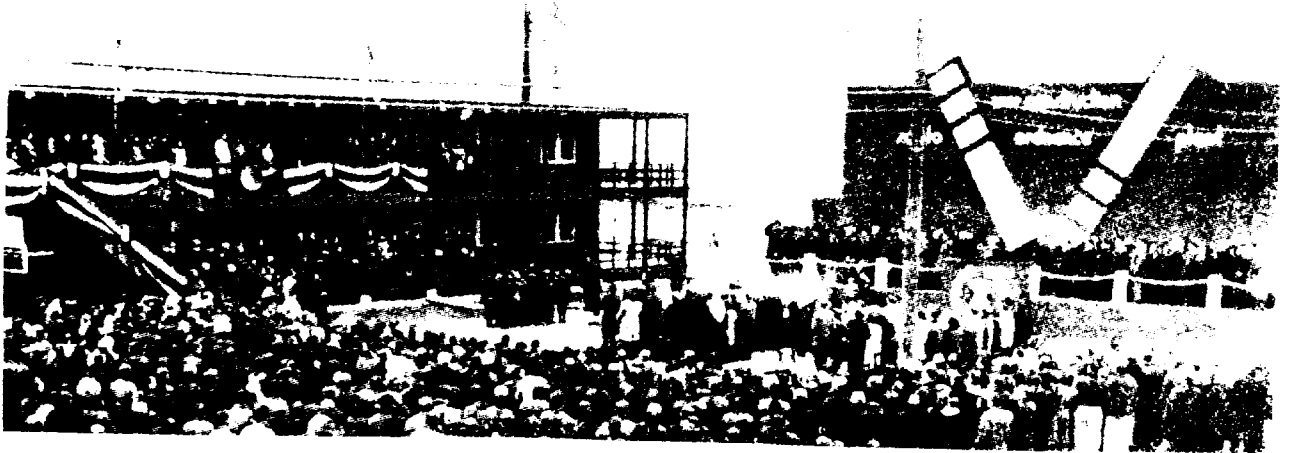
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PART I



A PROFILE OF  
THE  
SCIOTO ORDNANCE PLANT

## TIMELINE

### Part I

#### The Scioto Ordnance Plant

December 7, 1941	Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor.
February, 1942	Planes fly over area north of Marion.
March 2, 1942	Farmers notified by Government to sell out and leave area by May 1.
April, 1942	Surveying and removal of fences and buildings begin.
May 1, 1942	Deadline for farmers to leave area.
May 9, 1942	Area closed to civilians.
June, 1942	Administration area buildings ready for occupancy.
Fall, 1942	U.S. Rubber starts production of fuzes and boosters.
Late 1943	Atlas Powder produces artillery ammunition.
December 31, 1943	U.S. Rubber ceases production.
January 15, 1944	Permanente, Division of Kaiser Corporation, starts manufacture of M-76 Bombs (Goop Bombs) and M-74 (Cluster Bombs).
Midyear 1944	Kilgore Manufacturing Company produces bombs.
December 1944	Big Explosion — Kilgore pulls out.
January 1945	Ferro-Enamel begins production of bombs.
August 14, 1945	V-J Day — War Ends — Operations cease.

## PART I

# INTRODUCTION

Farmers northeast of Marion, Ohio had two months to vacate their farms after they were notified on March 2, 1942 that the United States government was taking their land to build an ordnance plant. Some pronounced it "ordnance" and thought it had something to do with laws.

Fifteen days before the May 1 deadline the first fence was torn out to make room for the first building, a warehouse, on Likens Road. Soon throngs of workmen were pouring into the Marion area to help in the construction phase. Many workers were trucked in from the hills of Kentucky and skilled workers were drawn from a wide area. Never in the history of Marion County had there been seen such a frenzy of building activity. It was a traumatic time for those farm families that had to move to make way for the construction.

Once in operation the Scioto Ordnance Plant manufactured fuzes and boosters, 20 millimeter bullets, 50 calibre artillery shells, 65 millimeter shells, 75 millimeter shells, incendiary bombs and napalm barrel bombs. This was a formidable arsenal of weaponry to support the allied forces during a time of world crisis. It is possible that the incendiary cluster bombs and 500 pound incendiary bombs that were used against Dresden, Berlin and Tokyo were manufactured here.

Fire bombs have made war a human tragedy of the greatest magnitude. Their capabilities are described by David Irving in his book *THE DESTRUCTION OF DRESDEN*. He estimates that 135,000 people died in the fire bombing of Dresden in February of 1945. In comparison, the atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima killed 71,379 people.

There are at least two reasons why artillery production at the Scioto Ordnance Plant was of short duration. One, production levels were beyond expectation. Two, the projected production needs which had taken losses at sea into account had been too high as the German U-Boats (submarines) were knocked out of commission which gave our ammunition ships safer passage.

Our research has revealed the spirit of a community at work during a period unparalleled in our history. While this book covers only the Scioto Ordnance Plant and the Marion Engineer Depot, that spirit extended to the many Marion plants that earned E awards for excellence. It was a time of hard work and heroic dedication. There was also sorrow and pathos and sometimes fun and humor.

While this account is fragmented and inconclusive in certain areas, it has been our earnest effort to be fair, honest and as complete as we could be after forty years.

Charles D. Mosher  
Delpha Ruth Mosher



## Increase in Minor Injuries

With the increase of injuries and the coming of summer with its special risks, Safety Director Russel Frank offered the following caution:

Located near each time house is a board showing the number of days the lines have worked since the last disabling accident. The Safety Department wishes to point out that the operations in B-1 represent about one-fifth of the total exposure to accidents here. The other four-fifths are in F-4.

During June our operations saw a 98 per cent increase in minor injuries. The following departments had a decrease or at least no increase! Mixing Room, F-4; Bomb Cleaning, F-4; Component Parts, B-1; Receiving, B-1; Parts Assembly, B-1; Testing, B-1; Power House; Checkers; Garage; Inspection; Laboratory; Maintenance; Truck Drivers.

Occasionally we hear of employees receiving a minor injury and failing to report it to the dispensary right away. This is a very dangerous practice, as serious infections can result from neglected scratches.

Summer work has its own special hazards. You will be comfortable doing the hardest work if you follow a few simple health rules. Dress suitably, bathe frequently; eat moderately of a well-balanced diet; drink moderately and get plenty of rest. The use of salt tablets is recommended and you should also salt your food well. Learn to recognize poison ivy and stay away from it. — by Russell Frank, Safety Director (*FERRO FIRELANDS NEWS*, July 1945, p. 2)



## M-74 Blues

Ralph Brandenburg, superintendent over B-1 and former radio singer, turned whimsical in a poem celebrating the pressure to produce ever more cluster bombs:

When I come to work in the morning  
The very first thing I see  
Is Mr. T. E. Myers pointing his finger at me.  
This is what I hear him say:  
'We gotta have more bombs from B-1 today.'  
So he starts the M-74 Blues that way.  
Next, I start for 'Milly' and his gang,  
And when I see that boy I want to run,  
'Cause I know that the man I didn't send him'  
Really put him on the bum.  
I'm getting them M-74 Blues.  
Finally I go to the end of the line  
To the guy that rides the 'gravy train.'  
'If only Reed will tell me he's doin' fine!  
He says, 'Give me another man and —  
I'll put the place on the map again.'  
I'm getting them M-74 Blues."

(By Ralph Brandenburg, July, 1945, p. 2)

## Likens Chapel Used for Uranium Storage

Kenneth Foos said that Likens Chapel, located on the northeast corner of Pole Lane Road and Likens Road, was used by the government during the war.

"We were told," he said, "that the government stored uranium in there during the war. Then when they started to sell this land back they moved the uranium out and had to decontaminate the church. How, I don't know. But they moved the uranium down to the old deserted army camp down at the old Army Engineer Depot. And from there on I don't know what they did with it.

"When DeKalb bought 2,200 acres in here from the government the church went back to DeKalb. Mr. Walter Anderson was head of their poultry department. He was quite a religious man and he thought it would be nice to give the church back to the community, I believe. It was a Methodist church (previous to the war), but Walt Anderson was from Wisconsin and belonged to a Swedish Covenant church up there. So they started a Covenant church here. It is quite small in there. But they do have restrooms that Walt Anderson had put in when he was overseer which they didn't have before the war. It is on City of Marion water and natural gas.

Kenneth continued, "The Likens Chapel parsonage was built the year President Kennedy was assassinated, 1963. In fact, we were putting the beams through the basement when the neighbor came over and told us that we just lost our President through assassination."

## Danger Faced Daily

The author said to Tom Myers, "Now, this obviously was dangerous work. How did people feel when they began to work with powder and explosives?"

Tom answered thoughtfully, "Oh, it was rough! You had to train these people. You had to talk. You couldn't get up and try to drive those people because a lot of them were real nervous. I have seen girls cry out there. They were scared, but we would talk to those girls. The foreman would and I would if I was in that district. That's the way we handled it.

"Once they got in there and if they got too nervous we had to another one to put right in there, and then we let them go back to the bomb shelter and lie down, or what have you. We had to operate that way and that's the way we operated. You could not push them when they were nervous. If you do, you're going to have explosions and the work won't be completed right, and so forth."

But the need for the armaments of war would soon be over. The "Enola Gay" was winging its way across the Pacific toward Hiroshima, carrying a new kind of bomb and with it a new era.

## CHAPTER 11

### War Ends And Post War

#### Morality of Building Bombs That Cremate

Tom Myers was asked, "You knew that the products that you were helping to produce were deadly. How did you feel in those days about assembling those instruments of death and destruction?" Tom's response, as always, was straightforward and from the heart:

*"We knew what they could do because we tested those bombs. I went there so many times to see them tested. I wanted to see how they were working because a lot of time some of Mr. Kaiser's people in Oakland, California would want to know just how they were doing — how destructive the bombs were."*

*"We went out to the testing area (located approximately 300 yards north of Williamsport Road a little west of the ravine, across from present day Fairpark Subdivision) and we were in a five acre woods. We set one of them off and those trees, many of them quite large, were blown all to pieces. And there were fragments flying all over and what a fire they made. The whole woods disappeared before our eyes, leaving only a snag when Chemical Warfare was done..."*

*"Oh, Charles, don't you think I knew what those bombs were doing when..." He broke off, shaking his head with the torment of thought. "I had two sons in the service and so many friends up to forty years old that were gone (dead) who had worked for me when younger... I knew what the Germans were doing. I knew about their buzz bomb. I knew about what they were using over there."*

*"I couldn't let that (deadly power) come here in any way. I thought what a man has to feel, but I couldn't let that enter my mind. My idea of this bomb — I was never told this by anyone — was that it was made to destroy property, not to destroy the people with it. But if you can destroy all the property around — all the ammunition, factories, everything — you could get rid of them with this bomb. I figured that it would do more good than anything they had out there at the time."*

*"Of course it was nothing like an atomic bomb, Charles, but it did its work. And it was made to get rid of property. And, of course, it also cost a lot of lives. And I knew that. But I had a job to do and I was thinking of my two boys — plus many more!"*

Then Tom laughed and continued. "Mr Bob Mason, who owned WMRN in those days, got pretty upset about the testing." When the author

suggested that the impact must have disturbed Mr. Mason's station, Tom smiled and nodded his head, "I'll say it did! I told Bob he could go back and manage his station and I would get on with building bombs to win the war."

Even though Tom was not on the best of terms with Mr. Mason due to keeping him out of the gates and the testing of bombs near the radio station, when he received the news that the war was over he immediately called WMRN so they could air the long awaited news.

The war had been one long nightmare the world over. When the announcement came on August 14, 1945 that the Japanese had surrendered — V-J Day — it was a time of relief and celebration.

Word came to Tom E. Myers from Washington at 7:00 A.M. that the war was over. Before his own shift people were told he set guards in place so that none could leave their place of work. "Some were mad," Tom said, "but all did their work pretty well considering the event. But there was no way we could get the midnight shift in. No way."

Tom went on to tell about a fire that took place on that memorable day: "At 8:00 A.M. we had a fire. It was not set on purpose. It was an accident. Nitrogen. It burned up a truck and a 'Cat'. Firemen and the foreman stayed on the job all day and through the night. I did too. I did not go to the Harding Hotel to celebrate until the next morning about 8:00 A.M., it was."

Tom recalled happily, "They were all so happy. Charles, people were happy that the war was over. Oh, I'm glad we could celebrate. That we had something to celebrate over."

Sally Murray was among those who were so glad the war was over. She reported that they "partied all night" at Hotel Harding. She had worked there from 1943, "until the day the place closed down."

The long nightmare was over. The production of the implements of war at the Scioto Ordnance Plant ceased even more quickly than it had started.

#### No War, No Shower For Norma

For Norma Gaster Primmer the end of the war will ever be a date etched in her mind. She

explained:

"My fiance had been overseas in Germany for a long time and he was coming home so we could be married in August. The girls on the line knew I was going to get married and that I was going to take some time off. Elda Kohbarger — anyone who worked in B-1 would remember her — was taking up a collection, which wasn't unusual. I don't remember what she said it was for, but I gave a donation. We did that often. People didn't give a lot but it was a lot for that time. Later I learned that this collection was for my wedding present. And here I had given a donation!

"I was married on August 5th and we all know when the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima so it was that same time. All the people that I had worked with had written their name down and the amount they gave. And the intention was that I would get the list, but the war ended. (See Appendix) So they never got around to having a wedding shower or even a card, but Elda Kohbarger had the money that was collected.

"She didn't know what to do with it. The people had scattered far and wide. So she went to Carroll's Jewelry Store and this is part of the crystal she bought (Norma showed the crystal). It was very beautiful and I still have most of it. This is what I received as a wedding gift from the people that I worked with out there."

### Postwar Activity

With the cessation of hostilities the production lines at S.O.P. were shut down immediately. While the ordnance area could never return to the same rural patchwork of neat farm fields, it was necessary to ready it for civilian use. A few stories emerged from the activities of that postwar period.

Kenneth Foos told a bizarre story of going into the Magazine Area, where Grandview Estates is now located, after the Japanese had surrendered. Kenneth's father, Harley L. Foos, received a call from Mr. Peck who was in charge of dismantling the Scioto Ordnance Plant. He wanted them to look at some buildings to see if they could be saved for farm use. Kenneth describes the visit:

"After we had our badges and everything made out we went out to Matheny Drive, which is the main street back into Grandview Estates now, with Mr. Peck's assistant. We had to stop and take all metal objects out of our pockets — any keys, knives, anything that would cause a spark.

"There were 144 houses in there. These buildings were 30'x40', frame, 2x4's. They were covered on the outside by asbestos, corrugated roofing. They would have made nice storage sheds for a farm.

"We drove back through there and they were about all locked up. Nobody was around, but a guard finally found one in the back that was open and some fellows were working in there. Now, they were just civilians, and here after we had emptied our pockets at the gate, they were using an air hammer to chip out a crack in the cement floor to fill it with patch filler. We couldn't have change in our pockets, but they could use an air hammer there!

"But what really floored us was that the building was half-filled with powder. One fellow sitting on top

of one of the bags asked another fellow if he had a cigarette lighter.

"The guy that took us in, who was an assistant to Mr. Peck, said, 'Just wait until I get back and tell Mr. Peck about this one!'"

### Runway for Planes at S.O.P.

After the war, Leroy Frost worked with a gang charged with the task of removing the iron gridwork which had been placed in a field northeast of the Monsanto building to serve "probably as a runway for cargo planes, as it was the width which cargo planes would need to land."

The men tugged at it but could not budge it. Then they used cranes and bulldozers and finally broke it free of its resting place. "Grass and weeds grew up in the gridwork," according to Frosty, "in order to conceal it from sight." He theorized that temporary markers were set up for planes that needed to land.

"The gridwork ran at an angle from southeast to northwest," Frosty recalled. He wasn't sure if one ran in another direction, but he believed it did.

### Fifty A Day Too Much Pay!

When the war was over, several young men, including Donnie Pearson, Al Beach and Don Stevens, unloaded empty bomb shells from boxcars. Don Stevens describes it:

"Well, Johnny Artipous had contracted to move a bunch of bombs in the cars. I suppose they had already been boxed and they just had to be unloaded. So we sub-contracted from him, forming gangs of four to unload these cars.

"We got \$200 a car and I mean we really worked. All you saw was elbows getting them bombs rolling out of them cars. We had a system set up and the four of us could unload a carload in a day. That made each of us \$50 a day which was lots of money then.

"Fred Scherff ran the employment office at the time and he wouldn't let us do it. He didn't like us making that much money, I guess. He said we didn't have insurance, and we didn't have this, and didn't have that. So we went into partnerships together. They said that would be alright. But then Scherff wouldn't hold still for that even.

"Finally, Johnny had to take over and hire his own people and get the job done that way. He had to get unemployment set up, insurance on the men, and so forth — that whole deal.

"That put us out of business. We didn't make \$50 a day anymore! This was when they were winding up the operations at the Ordnance Plant."



## Monsanto Building

While the Monsanto building was built in 1947-1948 and has little to do with this research, except that it sits on the Scioto Ordnance grounds, it is of interest because so much speculation surrounds it.

After World War II, which had been ended with the dropping of the two atomic bombs on Japan, the U.S. Government continued its production of atomic energy, exploring several methods, not knowing which operation would prove to be the best. The Monsanto Company was given the contract for development of one of the methods. However, the production of atomic energy by the Oak Ridge, Tennessee plant proved to be the one that the government chose to continue and therefore the Monsanto operation was abandoned.

Leroy Frost worked with the engineers on the building. He described it as an enormous project—pouring the thick walls and roof, lining the interior and exterior walls with lead. Once he was working high up on a beam extending outward from the building when he lost his balance and fell into concrete in the crane bucket. "That was the last time I went up there. That ended it!" Frosty exclaimed.

When asked what the Monsanto Plant was designed to manufacture, Frosty replied without equivocation, "Why, it was built to produce uranium. Those walls were lead-lined because they were going to make uranium in there." When pressed about his source of information, Frosty answered with forthrightness, "I heard this from the engineers."

Once, as Frosty came across uniforms to be worn by persons involved with the operation of the plant, he bent over and tried to lift a heavy uniform. "That lead-lined uniform was so heavy I couldn't pick it up. Those men needed help to dress in them."

Don Meiley, in charge of electrical distribution for the Marion Engineer Depot gives the following account regarding his purpose in being in the enormous building after it was closed:

*"We had to maintain that building over there. There was no activity in it but we checked stack lights for the air force." When asked if they manufactured anything while he serviced the building, he said, "Not while I had it... I think it was more experimental... Well, it was supposed to be atomic energy, but I don't know what they did inside. Probably something pertaining to the atomic bomb. There was a laboratory and a lot of rooms."*

After the Monsanto Company sold the building it was gutted of copper and lead and other strategic materials. It was later purchased by Gary G. Warner who operates it as Warner Warehousing.

## The Whisper of History

One can almost hear the whisper of history while walking on the special ground where the activities of war production were carried on north of Marion, Ohio. Thousands of men and women worked here during that period more than forty years ago. They gave of themselves to defend and protect freedom in this great land.

While the Moshers were researching this book, N. W. McMackin, superintendent of the Marion Correctional Institution, kindly gave them permission to video-tape Scioto Village. There are ten houses on "King's Row", several of which were moved in from farms taken by the government in 1942, and they have been kept in a good repair. They are the officer's living quarters.

He then offered them a tour of the institution's grounds and buildings. With Safety Director Charlie Daniel as their chauffeur and guide the tour took four hours.

The Administration Building of M.C.I. is located just a short distance north of where the Administration Building for the Scioto Ordnance Plant once stood. All of the old S.O.P. buildings were razed to make room for M.C.I. Off to the east of Scioto Village is the area where the six prisoner-of-war barracks once stood. Reports on the precise location of the barracks and the number of prisoners-of-war that were housed there are at this time sketchy.

The Moshers had also come to check out rumors still persisting that prisoners-of-war from Camp Marion had been buried in a small graveyard on the prison grounds at M.C.I. As it turned out, the "POW burial grounds" was the final resting place for the bodies of a few unclaimed inmates of M.C.I., not the burial ground for prisoners-of-war.

While on the grounds, Safety Director Daniel took the researchers back to the old Adams Quarry. The quarries in the S.O.P. area were one of the reasons this prime farmland had been chosen as the site of an important war operation. While they had furnished stone for roads and concrete, it probably hadn't been anticipated that they would have other uses.

Along with the Blue Limestone Quarry the Adams quarry had been used for dumping empty goop barrels. Sometimes they had flamed for fifteen minutes under twenty feet of water. Now on a dry ledge rests an old and weathered steam shovel showing clearly on its sides the former high watermark of the quarry. The water has now receded, just as the excitement of the war years has receded. Only some piles of concrete and a few rusting barrels in the bottom of the quarry remain as a reminder of the part the Scioto Ordnance Plant played in winning the war.

## TIMELINE

### Part II

#### The Marion Engineer Depot

April 22, 1941	Construction of Engineer Storage Depot authorized.
Early May 1942	War Department contacted farmers for land acquisition.
Early June 1942	Deadline for farmers to vacate area.
June 11, 1942	Construction of facilities began.
August 23, 1942	Second Battalion of 333rd Engineers Regiment arrived.
September 1942	Marion Engineer Depot began operation.
September 24, 1942	Colonel Carleton B. Shaffer, first CO, assumed duties.
November 30, 1942	Second Battalion of 333rd Engineers Regiment departed.
December 7, 1942	Marion Engineer Depot dedicated.
May 1943	Peak tonnage shipped.
June 26, 1943	445th Engineer Base Depot Company arrived.
August 14, 1943	445th Engineer Base Depot Company departed.
November 24, 1944	Colonel David L. Neuman died at MED.
June 18, 1945	ASFTC-30th Training Regiment arrived.
September 4, 1945	World War II ends.
1948	Employment near 1,300.
1959	Employment near 1,000.
July 5, 1960	Phasedown of MED announced to employees.
1960	Employment near 500.
June 30, 1961	Closing of MED operations.
June 25, 1970	Reunion of MED employees held.
May 27, 1986	Asbestos storage at MED revealed.

## CHAPTER 12

### Second War Facility Comes To Marion County

#### Summary Of The Operation Of The Marion Engineer Depot

With the community reeling from the impact of the construction of the Scioto Ordnance Plant it was unaware that on April 22, 1942, the Corps of Engineers of the Ohio River Division had received authorization for the construction of an Engineer Storage Depot in the vicinity of Marion, Ohio.

The Division Engineer had been instructed to proceed immediately with the acquisition of land and preparation of plans for construction. Two authorizations totaling \$4,000,000 were made for the planning and construction. The site of Marion was selected because of its railroad facilities, the accessibility of construction equipment and the availability of workers skilled in maintenance and operation of construction equipment.

The site chosen contained 640 acres and was located along Route 30 South (now Route 309) approximately two miles east of the city limits of Marion. Farmland was acquired, the farmers moved and construction began June 11, 1942 and was completed on November 30, 1942.

Marionites had to learn a new pronunciation for the word "depot". While the facility in west Marion where you met trains was called the "dEE-po", this new area east of Marion was called a "dep-o" which means a warehousing facility for military supplies.

During the next several months the new depot had various names. It was called the War Aid Depot, The Marion Quartermaster Depot, The Marion Holding and Reconsignment Depot, and finally the Marion Engineer Depot.

It was laid out with 4 avenues, 6 streets, and had 22 miles of railroad track. It was the largest depot of its kind in the United States, storing and renovating heavy construction machinery for the U.S. Army. During its peak production month of May 1943 it handled 44,000 tons of troop stock shipped and 23,000 tons received.

To help with the construction of railroad lines, the Second Battalion of the 333rd Engineers Regiment of the U.S. Army arrived on Sunday, August 23, 1942. This was the first of several military units to be stationed at the depot.

Prisoners of War were encamped at this depot and were used for labor and mechanical work from December 1944 to February 1946, with a total of 344 being utilized in April 1945. Their barracks at the east end of the depot grounds had originally housed the army engineer troops and was called Camp Marion.

Peak employment at the depot during the war totaled 1,487 civilians in July 1944, plus military personnel.

Following the war the Marion Engineer Depot contributed to the economy of the community until 1960 when a phaseout began. Employees were transferred or separated and the facilities were phased out. A 141 acre section of the old depot grounds was used by the U.S. General Services Administration.

Land at the east end of the depot where prisoners of war had been housed was acquired by the newly organized River Valley School District for the construction of a consolidated high school. Other land and buildings on the depot grounds were sold. An era had ended.

A profile of the Marion Engineer Depot follows.



## The Manhattan Project at M.E.D.

Rumors had been bandied about that a part of the Manhattan Project, the name given a very secret operation to explore the manufacturer of the first atomic bomb, had been stored at the M.E.D. just prior to the exploding of the bomb in the desert.

The authors, after asking scores of people, finally found a woman who knew something about the subject. Mary Evelyn Prior revealed the following story:

*"Well, I'm afraid I can't shed much light. All I know is that a lieutenant who worked in the Field Administration Office — . . . he was in charge of the warehouse in which I worked (He more or less supervised my supervisor) . . . he knew that I was very familiar with the things that had been coming and going in the warehouse for a couple of months. Because any free time I had, like at lunch hour or breaks, I would wander around in there. So he came to me one day, and he said, 'Do you know anything about the Manhattan Project?' I'd never heard anything about it. And, of course, my records all had numbers somehow identifying shipments either incoming or outgoing. Nothing was identified by nomenclature — such as 'Manhattan Project.'"*

*"So he said, 'Come with me and see if you remember seeing these boxes anywhere.' So I went to the west end of the Warehouse Three with him and there were several boxes. There was absolutely no identification on them. They were boxed up in their normal way, some were small, others were larger. There was no uniform size. There were ten or so and there was nothing on them except the stipling 'Manhattan Project.' So I said they don't look like anything I ever saw before."*

*" . . . he took a crowbar and pried the lid off of a couple of them. There were some odd pieces of metal in them. There was no packing list in them or anything. No paper of any kind inside the box. Pieces of metal, some had paper, maybe wrapping paper, around some of them. Maybe it was some kind of a preservative paper, I don't know. But that was all that was there. So he told me to go back to my job and he would investigate it further and he would make some phone calls. So I don't think too much time elapsed — maybe a day or two — when he came to my office and he was really pale. And he said, 'You don't know anything about the Manhattan Project!!!!' I said, 'No, I don't know a thing about it.' He said, 'I mean, you don't know anything about it.'"*

*"I was startled about it. I said, 'Well, what do you mean? All I know about it is these boxes.' He said, 'You never saw these boxes.' And I began to get the gist of the thing... that I was to forget that they were ever there. But that's all I ever knew about it. I'm sure he didn't know what they were. Apparently he had called someone and he had been told in no uncertain terms — drop it like a hot potato! And he did."*

Remembering when the boxes were located, Mary Evelyn Prior said, "Well, the experimental bomb was detonated in Alamogordo. That was in July, I believe. Now this might have been 3, 4, or 5 weeks before that."

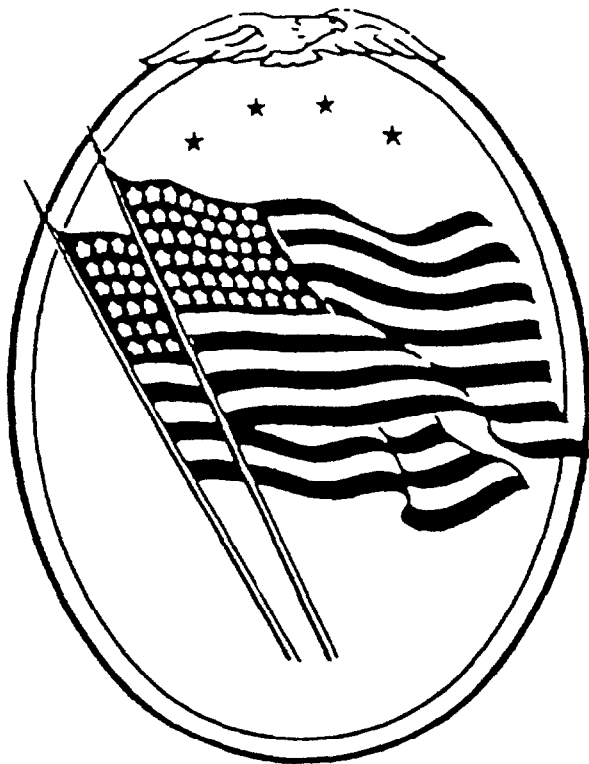
Speaking of the lieutenant's attitude, Mary Evelyn Prior concluded, "He was told to drop it and he didn't want me to remember."

When Jessie McAfee, Chief of Stock Control, was asked by the authors what she knew about the Manhattan Project, she replied, "Well, not much. Because we didn't know very much. It was shipped in and we recorded it in our regular inventory, and then it was shipped out. We didn't know it was shipped out until we got the documents back that said to remove it from stock. That's about the only thing we knew. And we didn't really know anything until the bomb was dropped."

When asked what part of the Manhattan Project was stored at the M.E.D., Jessie replied, "... I don't know what part of it we had. It was stored out here for a short period of time. A few weeks."

Some who claimed they knew more about secret wartime operations, such as storing a small part of the Manhattan Project, refused to disclose what they knew for fear they would be violating those wartime secrecy vows.

After forty years, the haunting memory of military orders and FBI surveillance still lingers in the hearts and minds of those loyal Americans.



## CHAPTER 17

### Peacetime Operations

While the end of the war brought about the closing of The Scioto Ordnance Plant almost overnight, The Marion Engineer Depot continued to serve the national welfare for another 15 years. During this time its functions were varied, if largely routine, but it contributed to the Korean conflict as well as to the needs of a peacetime army. And it was a sizeable factor in the prosperity of the community.

The storage, and care and preservation of materials in storage, was the principal function after the ceasing of hostilities. However, the Depot Maintenance Shop was expanded and was at one time regarded as the outstanding maintenance shop for heavy construction type engineer equipment in the Corps of Engineers.

In 1959, M.E.D. still employed about 1,000 people with an annual funding program of nearly \$7,500,000. Approximately 2,000 tons of supplies were being shipped and 1,000 tons received each month. At that time there was more tonnage of Engineer supplies stored at M.E.D. than at any other depot in the United States.

Improvements were still being made as part of the 1,925,000 gross square feet of covered storage space was being converted to controlled humidity storage, with 556,000 square feet already completed. In addition there was 4,365,000 gross square feet of improved open storage space within the Depot.

Over 100 railroad cars were handled daily on the 24 miles of track by two radio equipped diesel engines. The yard and storage track was capable of holding approximately 1,000 railroad cars.

There was 12 miles of surfaced road within the complex over which the administrative vehicles — sedans, busses, trucks, etc. — were driven a total of 33,000 to 40,000 miles a month.

About 10,000 items of heavy construction and machine tool equipment was in storage there. Approximately \$320,000 was expended annually by the Care and Preservation Branch to check and prevent the deterioration of this inventory. This remedial operation annually consumed approximately 7,500 gallons of oil, 1,500 pounds of grease, and 9,000 gallons of paint.

#### Safety Director Reveals Hazardous Materials Stored

After the war, in 1948, Robert "Bob" Ferguson began working at the Marion Engineer Depot in the Fire Department. In 1955 he was transferred to the Safety Office and was then soon promoted to Safety Inspector and eventually Safety Director.

Prior to working at the Depot, and before entering the service, Ferguson worked at the War Department in 1942 under Colonel Hueling, the Scioto Ordnance Base Commander. The offices of the War Department, according to Ferguson, were located "on the second floor of the Citizens Building at the corner of Prospect and West Center." This is where the work of the War Department was carried out prior to the completion of the Administration Building at the S.O.P., the present site of Marion Correctional Institution.

According to Ferguson, the "cluster of black buildings, perhaps gray, (United Parcel now numbered among them), west of Likens Chapel and on the north side of Likens Road, were used for nuclear research both during and immediately following World War II."

The men in charge of the Depot during Ferguson's tenure were Colonel John Phelan, Colonel J. Arthur Hamilton, and once again Colonel John Phelan. During this time, Ferguson said, Milton Staley of Mt. Gilead was Chief of Labor and Equipment.

At the Army Engineer Depot a vast array of equipment was stored in enormous warehouses and sheds, according to Ferguson. "The equipment ranged from radioactive sniperscopes, to spare parts, to cyrogenic cylinders, to crude rubber, to heavy equipment, to Bailey bridge components." Bailey bridges were made by the British and were "floating bridges" which could be quickly erected. They had played an important part in winning the war in Europe.

"In 1948 there were between twelve and thirteen hundred people who worked at the Depot," Ferguson said, "and in 1960, just before the plant was phased out, the numbers had dwindled to five hundred."

"Because of the danger of radioactive materials warehoused at the Depot, a special building 24'x24'





### Warehouse Storage

The photograph vividly captures the warehousing activity near the close of the war. The wooden boxes stored on wooden frame shelving and the forklift working in the background offer a precise historical record of much of the work done inside Warehouse Three (Less than Carload), according to Charles D. Mosher.

*was constructed of brick, lead-lined interior walls, and a copper roof to house these dangerous radioactive materials. Concertina wire, triple layers, was placed around it. The building had but one door.*

*"Eventually the dangerous materials were removed to a dump site, perhaps the ocean," Ferguson continued, "and the work of decontaminating the place commenced, lasting several weeks. It was in 1956-1957 that this process of decontamination took place. The materials were so potent that their half-life was said to be fifty years (or would reduce itself by half in fifty years).*

*"There were a number of compensation cases filed by persons who claimed to be sick from radiation. Beta gamma detection instruments were employed to check the radiation."*

### Switchman To Engineer

Clyde Weatherbee started work at the Marion Engineer Depot as a railroad switchman in 1943 making ninety cents per hour. Later he was promoted to conductor and made a whole dollar.

Speaking with a sense of justified pride, Clyde said, "I worked for the government for twenty-nine years and three months and never lost a day's pay."

He recalled that there were "several accidents" while they were switching cars where the tracks came into the Depot across 30S (now 309). One such accident took place at the curve. The driver did not anticipate a train across the road, swerved, and struck a tree. "It was a bad accident."

"We had an enormous switching yard," Clyde said. "Enough track to make up two or three trains. The New York Central — this was before Conrail — didn't come into the yard. They picked up the cars on the other side of Route 30S.

"We serviced all engines in the Round House at the Depot. At the first we had steam engines, but then we had only diesel after the war. We always had four men on a crew. Two served on the engine, a fireman to watch on one side, and the engineer the other.

"After the war we had a radio so that we could communicate with Clyde Richardson, the yard master."

### Snowplows Sent To Memphis

Jessie McAfee said it was a big joke that the snowplows needed so badly in the North were sent down to the depot at Memphis, Tennessee, of all places. She put it this way:

*"Well, we always had a lot of snowfalls — right from the very beginning — at the Depot. But, all of a sudden, when it was running towards winter, we got a notification to move our snowplows down to Memphis.*

*"And this became a big joke because we didn't know what Memphis was going to do with snowplows. But, probably, they would just ship them back north anyhow. Quite a joke around the Depot that they were being shipped to Memphis."*

### The Sandblaster

One of the men who sandblasted Bailey bridges and rusty Army trucks after the war was Herman Johnson. He cleaned up the trucks and masked them in preparation for painting.

Chet Whit was his boss. The operation, at first done outside, was moved into Warehouse Three, "Department 308."

Herman wore a mask that covered his entire face. "It was a good job. I never saw anyone hurt bad." He worked at the Marion Engineer Depot until it was phased out.

### Everything Ship Shape

Mr. Robert Ballinger, born in 1903, worked at the Marion Engineer Depot as a welder from 1950-1960. He welded broken frames on cranes, repaired booms, and fixed various parts on caterpillars. He thought a good bit of his foreman, Mr. Edwin B. Geddis.

"Every so often," Mr. Ballinger said, "officers would come through, 15 - 24 of them sometimes, from other places. Had to have everything in good working order. It put you much on nerve. Everything was in good shape when those officers came through."

Years before, back in 1926, Ballinger began working as a welder for the Marion Steam Shovel (later Marion Power Shovel). He was sent to several states to repair shovels. "But," he concluded, "the Marion Engineer Depot was as nice a place as any I ever worked in my life."

Mr. Ballinger said he especially liked Col. Rene Quenneville who was always friendly.

Percy Edwin Weaver worked at the Marion Engineer Depot from 1948 until 1960 when it closed, first as a mechanic and then as a welder. He started working for one dollar an hour.

As a mechanic, he worked on heavy equipment: cranes, bulldozers and graders. Edgar Shrout was his first foreman. Later Clyde Mosier from Mt. Gilead became his foreman at the Base Maintenance Shop.

On one occasion he was examining heavy equipment and needed to get inside so he could "look outside in order to see the part clearly. I took my glasses off so I could see the machine part more clearly. Then I put them back on after I was finished." Percy smiled as he remembered: "Old Colonel Hooper, the CO, smiled big at that."

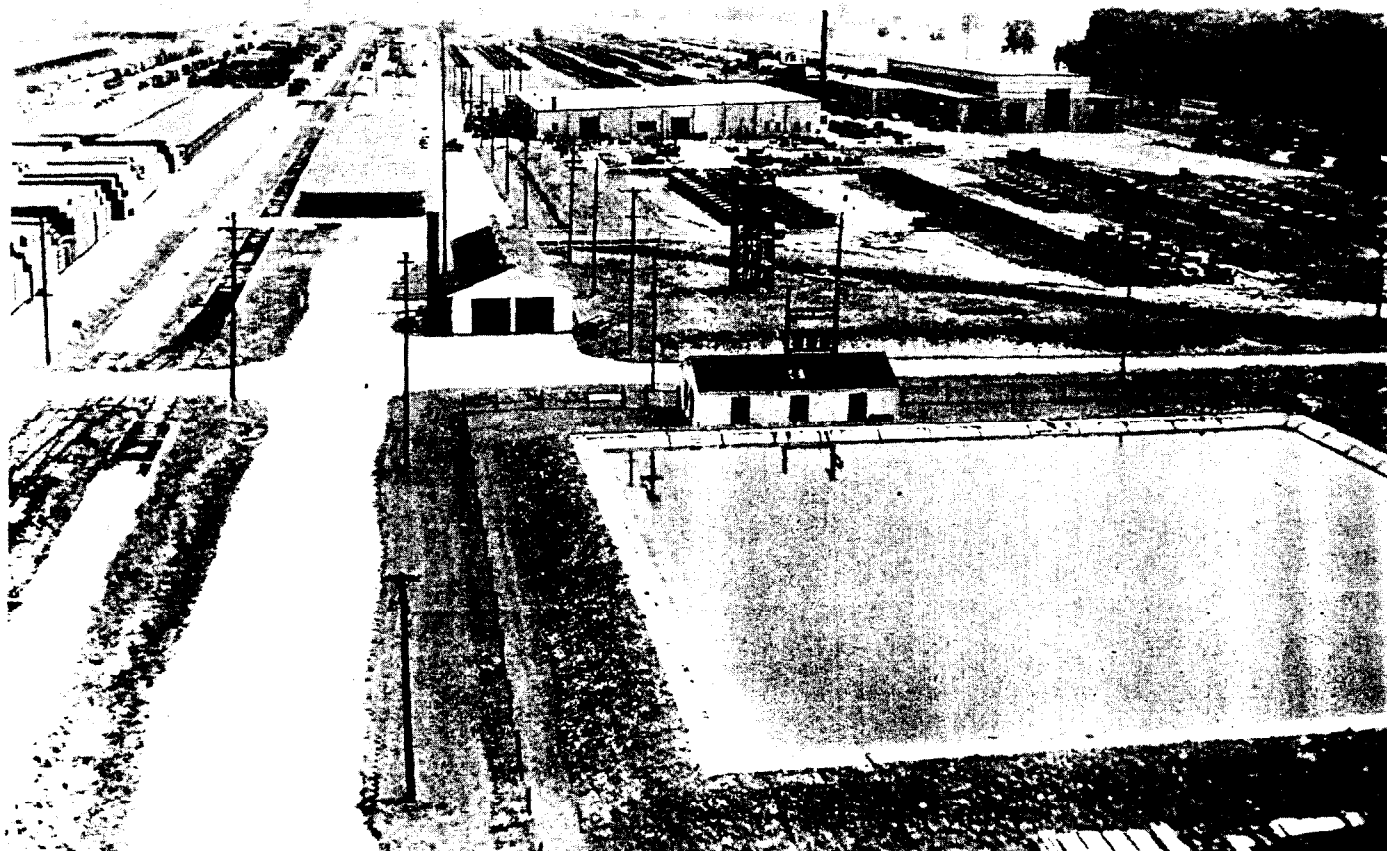
Choking up as he told Mosher, Percy recalled how good the people at the Marion Engineer Depot had been to him and to his family when he had undergone serious brain surgery. In due time both his sick leave and annual leave had been ex-

hausted. Three separate times the people in the Base Maintenance Shop took up collections to see him through those difficult months. When Percy tried to express his thanks, one of the men replied, "Well, we noticed that you always contributed when others had needs."

One of Percy's fondest remembrances is of receiving a ten-dollar award for offering a useful suggestion and of having his picture taken with Colonel Hamilton.

Percy E. Weaver told a humorous story about a fellow worker, Emmet Huntsman. Emmet liked to tell of his own wife's evaluation of his work: "If you ask my wife who the best welder here at the Marion Engineer Depot is, she'd say I was. She ought to. I've told her enough times!"

### Scenes at M.E.D.

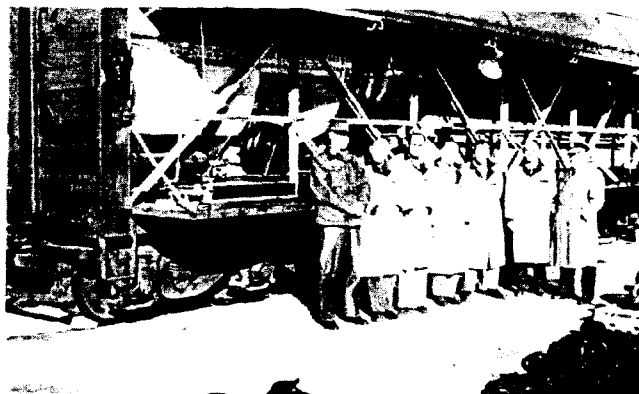






### Sniperscope Stored At Depot

The sniperscope was one of many items stocked at the Marion Engineer Depot ready for shipment. Pictured is a soldier with the sniperscope on his carbine, right, and searchlight on tank, center, which used infra-red rays to provide night mobility. The equipment, developed at the Army Engineer Research and Development Laboratories, Ft. Belvoir, Va. spots objects in the dark with invisible, heat-emitting infra-red rays. (THE MarEnDep TIMES of July 31, 1957)



In 1960 a huge generator from the M.E.D. was shipped to Alaska accompanied by a crew from the Depot. This photo shows (left to right) Col. Phelan, Marion K. Wick, Red Moses, Leo Russell, Harrison Jaycox, John Smith and Capt. Vertres with the generator loaded into a railroad car, ready for shipment. (Photo courtesy Mrs. Marion K. Wick)



### "Miss Post Engineer"

At a picnic, for Marion Engineer Depot employees, a bathing suit contest was held to name the winner "Miss Post Engineer." The accompanying picture shows Captain Keith presenting Mrs. Pauline Clement, the winner, the prize. (Photo courtesy of Pauline Clement).

### "Best Generators Come From Marion Engineer Depot"

Generators repaired at the Marion Engineer Depot were considered the best in the world Mary Evelyn Prior learned when she was sent to Kaiserslautern, West Germany after the war. She shared this account:

*"I hadn't realized that our Depot was very well known and that we had made a reputation for ourselves, because there were certainly other depots across the country and overseas.*

*"But after the Depot closed I worked for a while in Columbus at the Engineer Maintenance Center. From there I was sent to the Kaiserslautern Army Depot, Kaiserslautern, West Germany as an administrative assistant in this special office.*

*"While I was there I became acquainted with a German Jewish woman who was working for the U.S. Forces. And during our conversation she wanted to know where I came from. When I said, 'Marion, Ohio,' she said, 'Oh, that's where the good generators come from.'*

*"Of course, I wanted to know what she was referring to. Marion had a generator repair shop and I don't know how many hundreds and hundreds of generators were repaired out there. Once they were repaired they were put back into stock and were shipped to many places all over the U.S. and overseas.*

*"Apparently a quantity of them reached Kaiserslautern Army Depot and were in storage there. When army units that drew their stock from Kaiserslautern Depot needed a generator they would frequently say, 'See if they haven't got one from Marion, Ohio. We prefer the Marion generators.'*

*"This woman knew about this because she had to do with the locator system in the storage division and requests for materials would come through her. She would hear people saying they wanted generators from Marion. And I thought that was a pretty good mark for Marion."*

## CHAPTER 18

### The Marion Engineer Depot Closes

It was not without protest that the employees, the city of Marion and the state of Ohio met the announcement that the Marion Engineer Depot would be closed.

The July 6, 1960 issue of the MarEnDep News carried the headline "Depot To Be Phased Down". The Secretary of the Army in Washington had issued a release the day before stating that:

The Marion Engineer Depot, near Marion, Ohio, will be phased down to a reserve storage activity by 30 June 1961. Specified reserve engineer stocks will remain at Marion Engineer Depot.

707 employees whose functions are being transferred to other locations in the Army Supply System will be offered continuing employment in accordance with Civil Service regulations. The remaining 169 employees whose positions are being eliminated will be assisted in obtaining employment in other federal agencies or private industry. (*MarEnDep News*, July 6, 1960. *Courtesy of Kathryn Hazen Wittred*)

At 3:00 on July 5th all Depot employees were called to Shed 10 and Major Glenroy Ryan, Acting Commanding Officer, read the release from Washington and a letter shown at right from Colonel Phelan, Commanding Officer, assuring the employees of his efforts to insure them of job rights and placement.

A press conference was held following the meeting with representatives of the city, the Chamber of Commerce and the press and radio.

#### Former Employees Resigned To Closing

Jessie McAfee gave her views on why the Marion Engineer Depot was closed when others remained open:

"I think they felt it was supposed to be a temporary place when they built it. They had plenty of permanent depots that had been built.

"So we started in and had sales of what we could sell. In fact, my back porch, the beams and all, are part of the shipments of bridge parts that went up for sale. We shipped a lot of bridge parts. I knew they were to be put up for sale on the next big sale, so I went out and bought what I had to have. So that is where part of the lumber for my porch came from. I had been thinking about putting a back porch on the back so when the bridge parts went up for sale that was just a good time to do it."

## MarEnDep Times

### DEPOT TO BE PHASED DOWN

100 TO LEAVE WITHIN 60 DAYS  
HOUSEKEEPING FORCE TO REMAIN

The Secretary of the Army issued the following release yesterday in Washington 1400 hours (Marion time).

"The Department of the Army announced today that the Marion Engineer Depot, near Marion, Ohio, will be phased down to a reserve storage activity by 30 June 1961. Responsibility for storage of specified reserve engineer stocks will remain at Marion Engineer Depot.

"707 employees whose functions are being transferred to other locations in the Army Supply System will be offered continuing employment in accordance with Civil Service regulations. The remaining 169 employees whose positions are being eliminated will be assisted in obtaining employment in other federal agencies or private industry."

At 1530 hours all depot employees were called to Shed 10 and Major Glenroy Ryan, Acting Commanding Officer, read the release from Washington and a letter from Colonel Phelan, Commanding Officer, to all employees. Colonel Phelan stated: "In keeping with Civil Service Regulations and Department of the Army policy, as well as my own personal interest in your welfare, every effort will be made to insure you at job, funds and placement at other Department of the Army installations. Methods of placement for transfer will be given out as far in advance of their effective dates as possible.

"For those of you not desiring to transfer and the relatively few who may not qualify for transfer to another installation, let me assure you that a special effort will be made to assist you in obtaining work in private industry."

A press conference was held in Headquarters Building for representatives of the city, Chamber of Commerce and the local radio and press services. Present (Continued on Page 2).

were Mayor Karl Duse, Mr. Jasper Burt, President of the Manufacturers Council of the Chamber of Commerce, Mr. H. E. Webster, Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, Mr.

Charles Martin of ONE MARION STAR, and Mr. Charles Mertz of radio station WGN. The following personnel from the depot were present: Major Glenroy Ryan, Major M.O. Stevens, Captain William A. Jones, III, Mr. John Frederick, Sr., and Mr. H. C. Frost. Representing Local 1326 of the American Federation of Government Employees were its President, Mr. Claude Persinger, Jr., and its Vice President, Mr. Clyde Weatherbee.

The local press release is as follows: "The Secretary of the Army announced today the phase down by 30 June 1961 of the Marion Engineer Depot due to a declining need for its storage and maintenance facilities brought about by Department of the Army consolidation and reorganization of supply activities.

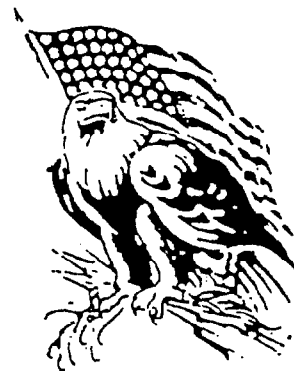
The principal functions of the depot are the storage, maintenance and overhaul of engineer supplies and equipment. As the phase down progresses, these functions will be assumed by other Army depots.

The phase down of the depot to a reserve storage activity eventually will have, through terminations and transfers, a direct effect on the 914 personnel presently employed. An initial reduction of 100 personnel will be accomplished within 60 days. Additional reductions will take place during the phase down period through 30 June 1961.

Official announcement of the depot's phase down was made for Col. John P. Phelan, Commanding Officer, by members of his staff in a brief meeting of depot employees.

The employees were informed that the phase down was not to be taken as a reflection against local operations but was due to consolidation of supply activities throughout the Department of the Army.

The release included a history of the depot and a few of its present statistics. Its annual operating budget has been in excess of \$7,250,000, of which approximately \$4,250,000 has been in salaries. Replacement costs, including land, improvements, equipment, and operating stocks, are estimated in excess of \$40,000,000. A recent valuation of troop stocks placed their value around \$135,000,000.



## Percy Weaver Transferred To Granite City Depot

In 1961, after the Marion Engineer Depot phased out, Percy Weaver moved his family to Granite City, Illinois where he was given government clearance to go down into missile silos to weld.

Mrs. Weaver added proudly, "When he went out to the Granite City Depot he had certain angles in welding that they hadn't seen before. These were used by others afterwards. He was his own boss there."

When Mr. Weaver finally ended up at Wright-Patterson, he joked to his fellow workers: "It took me twelve years to close down the Marion Engineer Depot, ten years to close down the depot in Granite City, and I'll see how long it takes me to close this one."

### Bond of Friendship Ten Years Later

The Depot Reunion, held in 1970, ten years after its closing, gives some indication of the close bond that existed between fellow employees and between the employees and the depot that they fought to keep open.

THE MARION STAR article of June 26, 1971 telling of the reunion, also gives a fitting summary of the history of the Marion Engineer Depot:

Former employees of Marion Engineer Depot are getting together today, 10 years after the installation's closing. More than 500 are expected, some from Arizona, Missouri, Tennessee, New Jersey, Georgia, Virginia and Kentucky.

Their purpose in coming? To see old friends and recall the way things used to be when the Depot was alive and thriving.

The facility at one time had the largest concentration of engineer supplies, in both dollar value and tonnage, of any in the United States. In addition to the Depot's primary function of storing newly-manufactured equipment and eventual dispersal, used equipment, shipped from overseas, also was renovated and sent out again.

The Depot covered 650 acres, had 99 buildings, more than 11 miles of roadway and upwards of 20 miles of railroad track. It employed about 1,200 civilians during the mid-50's and about a dozen military personnel.

The installation was built during World War II, in 1942. An initial allocation of \$4,000,000 was made for planning and construction, work began in June and the facility was completed in November. Marion was chosen for the site because of its proximity to railroads, construction equipment and because of the availability of skilled workers.

The Depot had its own newspaper, fire department, softball and bowling teams (the latter won a world championship among engineer installations) and dozens of job-oriented and recreational and social activities and programs for its employees.

From December 1944 until after the war ended, the Depot used German prisoners of war as mechanics, cooks, painters and general laborers. They were even loaned to local farmers.

Ten years later, the army began to phase out the operation, in the interests of economy and with the Depot's growing obsolescence in the face of changing



### Bond Of Friendship

The Depot Reunion, held in 1970, ten years after its closing, gives some indication of the close bond that existed between fellow employees and between the employees and the Depot that they fought to keep open.

Mrs. Fran Phelan, widow of former Marion Engineer Depot commanding officer John F. Phelan, was photographed flanked by two other Col. Rene Quenneville (left) and J. Arthur Hamilton, at the 10th anniversary of the facility's closing. Over 500 past employees of the Depot got reacquainted over a picnic dinner. Marion Jaycees helped in the affair. Tentative plans are being made for another reunion in five years.

methods. But the phaseout did not come without opposition from the city, Governor Michael DiSalle and Senators Frank Lausche and Stephen M. Young.

Land and buildings on the Depot were sold. River Valley High School now stands where the POWs were once housed. MARCA School is on part of the old Depot grounds. So is the National Guard Armory and Plant City Steel Company. (excerpted from article by David Drake, "Reunion at The Depot" THE MARION STAR, Sunday, June 26, 1971)

### The Secret Is Out

After much correspondence with government bureaucracy in Washington, D.C., calls to General Services Administration, conversation with guards at the Marion Engineer Depot, present and past, and assistance from Congressman Michael DeWine, all without a positive result, the researchers decided not to make further attempts to gain permission to videotape the inside of Warehouse Three at the Marion Engineer Depot.

It seemed such a small request; but GSA, no doubt, had their reasons for failing to grant the requested permission. People speculated about it: "The poor condition of the warehouse is embarrassing to them," "They have important matters to hide," or, finally, "That is typical government bureaucracy."

The following research by Matt Harvey, staff writer for THE MARION STAR, published Tuesday, May 27, 1986, may suggest a clue:

Probably not many people locally happen to know that several thousand tons of asbestos happen to be stored in their county.

The General Services Administration, owner of the asbestos, basically has kept the existence of the toxic

material a secret and says it had done so in a legal manner.

Now, the government agency is about to take the more than 4,000 tons of remaining asbestos at the GSA - Federal Property Resources Service Marion Depot to the road.

"Presently, only the transportation of radioactive, flammable and cryogenic materials requires public notification," the GSA states in a recent report to THE STAR. "Our operation at the Marion Depot does not involve the handling or transportation of these materials."

The asbestos at the Depot, located on Ohio 309 east of Marion is scheduled to be moved to the Warren Depot by October 31. About 2,000 tons of tannin, a substance used in the tanning of hides, also is stored at the Depot and is scheduled to be transported by June 30.

The materials must be moved because of the deteriorating condition of the Depot, according to GSA.

Despite a lack of willingness to voluntarily disclose the storage of asbestos locally, the GSA maintains that no safety hazard has been or will be posed to businesses, schools or residents in the area.

"Due to the safety, health and environmental controls that the National Defense Stockpile has established and implemented, the storage of hazardous materials . . . at the Marion Depot poses no threat to human health or the local environment."

Asbestos, in broken-down form, has been linked to nasal cancer and lung diseases. It often is used for insulation purposes.

According to the report, the qualifications of employees are thorough.

"All stockpile Depot personnel are qualified in their own specific job specification," the report states. "They have also been trained and instructed in the procedures outlined in our occupational health guidelines concerning respiratory protection, personal protective clothing and clean up/decontamination procedures."

"All work involving hazardous materials is closely monitored by qualified Quality Assurance Specialists who supervise, environmentally monitor and analytically determine sample results."

"In addition, all Depot employees are part of our annual Medical Surveillance Program which has been approved by the Office of Personnel Management."

The Marion Depot is a satellite of the Warren Depot, according to the report. Employees from Warren commute to Marion when required.

### Present Uses Of Depot Area

Driving along the main road leading east from Marion, now renumbered State Route 309, the two mile long complex of cement block buildings still makes an impact on the rural landscape. Kennedy Park with athletic fields and the Senior Citizens Center has been created at the west end and the former farmhouse that was once the home of the commanding officers of the Depot is now used by the Marion City Park Services. Three schools, MARCA, River Valley High School and River Valley Junior High School, occupy parts of the original Depot area. No sign of an army camp or prisoner of war barracks remain.

The buildings have been adapted to many uses. Through the years they have been used by the Ohio National Guard, Borden Inc., Otis Wright & Sons Inc., Neighborhood Youth Corporation, Marion Crawford Community Action, Greif Bros Corp., Nu-Supply Warehouse, Hasco Division-Oury Engineering Co., Plant City Steel Company. Music once resounded as bands practiced in a former warehouse.

The current Marion County Directory lists these establishments: Marion Industrial Center, Mid-Ohio Gymnastics, General Service Administration Public Buildings, Plant City Steel Company and Getman Brothers — the last two as divisions of Harsco.

Some of the buildings have been renovated with aluminum siding over the cement block construction and the interiors refitted for offices. Loading docks have been built and various companies use the storage facilities. A General Services Administration sign still stands alongside a rusting gate. Some of the buildings at the east end of the complex remain empty with broken windows, scaling paint and deteriorating concrete. No smoke issues from the former power plant tower.

No longer do long lines of cars issue from the gates each evening at 4:00. And traffic moves smoothly along the route now called 309 where for years the double yellow lines caused slow downs. Cars bump across the spur of the railroad that crosses the highway, almost never halted by a switch engine pulling cars of materials in or out of the Depot.

But memories of the Marion Engineer Depot still live in the hearts of those whose lives it touched. This is their story.

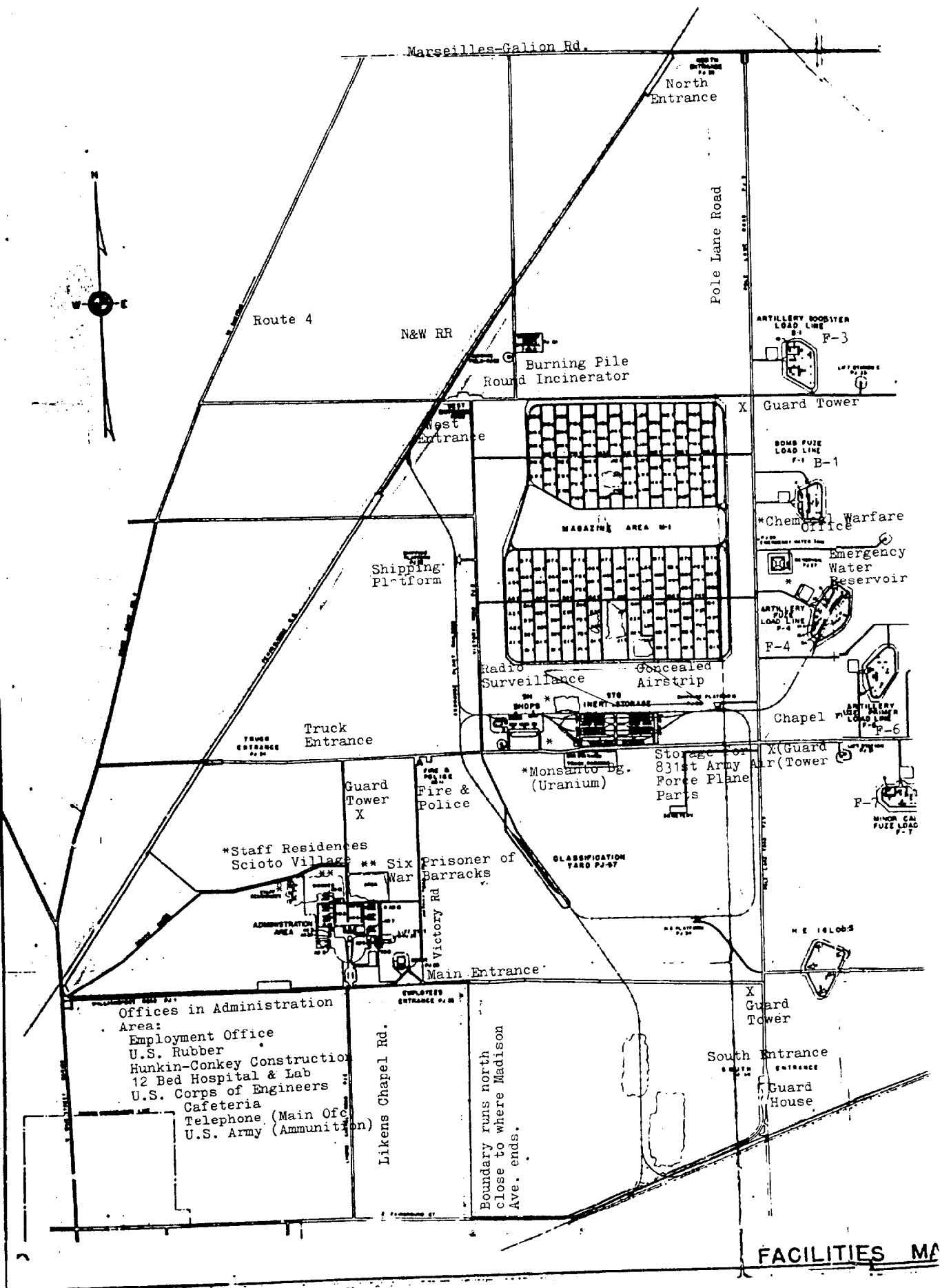
### Statistics Show Size of Operation

Some statistics show the scope of operations at the Marion Engineer Depot.

The Depot loaded 1,544 cars and unloaded 1,231 cars of material and equipment during the month of May 1945. Peak tonnage handled was reached in May 1943 with 44,000 tons of troop stock shipped and 23,000 tons received.

Peak employment totaled 47 Military personnel and 1,478 civilians in July 1944. There was a minimum of 416 civilians employed in September 1947.

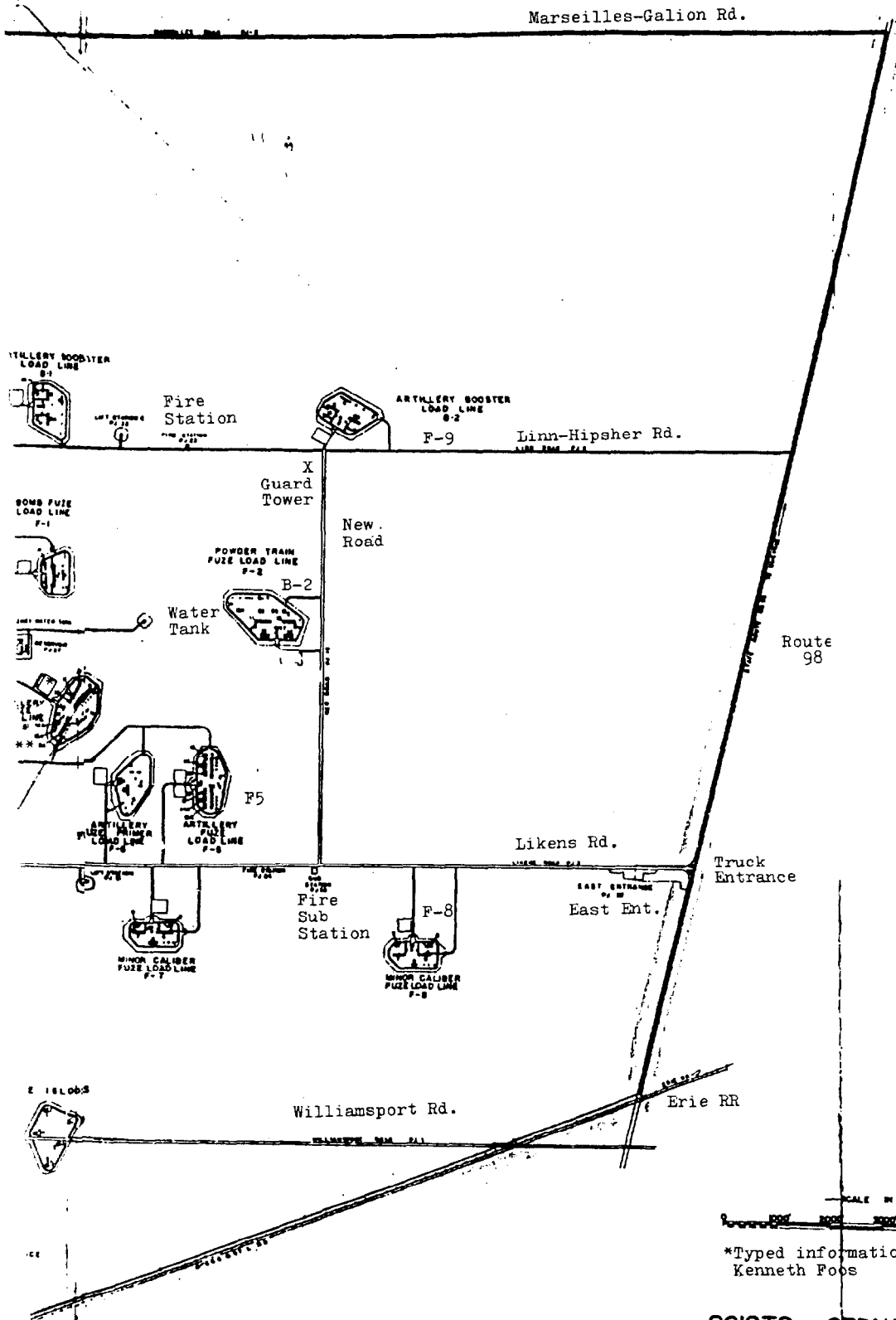
Prisoners of war were encamped at this Depot and utilized on labor and mechanical work from December 1944 to February 1946, a total of 344 being utilized in April 1945. (Taken from the brochure "180th ANNIVERSARY OF THE U.S. ARMY AND THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS")



FACILITIES MA

E-67





SCIOTO ORDNANCE PLANT  
MARION, OHIO

Exhibit "A"

ITIES MAP

RECORDED: 5/1947

E-67

## APPENDIX 4, Layout of the Scioto Ordnance Plant Area

1. ENTRANCES
  - 1) Main Gate - Williamsport Road and Victory Road — 12 to 15 gates.
  - 2) Truckers Entrance - West end of Likens Road and Norfolk-Western Railroad.
  - 3) Linn-Hipsher/Norfolk-Western Railroad and Victory Road.
  - 4) North Entrance - Marseilles-Galion Road and Pole Lane Road.
  - 5) East Entrance - Likens Road and Route 98 (trucker's entrance).
  - 6) South Entrance - Pole Lane Road.
2. GUARD TOWERS
  - 1) SE corner of Likens and Pole Lane Roads.
  - 2) SW corner of Linn-Hipsher and Pole Lane Roads.
  - 3) Corner of New Road & Likens Road (south side of road).
  - 4) Williamsport Road and Pole Lane Road.
  - 5) North of Administration Area.
  - 6) Corner of Linn-Hipsher and New Road.
3. ADMINISTRATION BUILDINGS - Located where Marion Correctional Institution is presently located. The following was housed in these buildings: Employment Office; Hospital with lab; Offices of the U.S. Army Ordnance Department; Corps of Engineers; Hunkin-Conkey Construction Contractors; U.S. Rubber Company; Main Cafeteria; and telephone exchange; Holabird and Root Engineers. The buildings were two-story, wooden frame construction.
4. STAFF RESIDENCES - located west of the Administration offices. Dubbed "King's Row."
5. SHOP AREA (sometimes called Maintenance, Garage or Repair area). Used by U.S. Rubber Co. as a maintenance area and to house two locomotive engines. Located back of what is now Warner Warehousing (Monsanto Building) on Likens Road.
6. REFILLING STATION - located across the road from the Shop Area, owned presently by NaChurs Fertilizer Company, where trucks, cars, etc. were refilled. Many pumps were located there. The tanks are still underground.
7. IGLOOS - located where the airport is presently located on Williamsport Road. There were five of them used to store mercuric fulminate.
8. F-3 - located on Pole Road north of Linn-Hipsher Road. It was first used as an Artillery Booster Load Line and later the line was used for clustering incendiary bombs.
9. B-1 - located north of F-4 on Pole Lane Road. Bomb Fuze Load Line.
10. B-2 - located on New Road, the only one on that road. Powder Train Fuze Load Line.
11. F-4 - located north of Likens Chapel on Pole Lane Road, east side. Artillery Fuze Load Line. Later where incendiary bombs were filled. Chemical Warfare Service office located here.
12. F-5 - located on the north side of Likens Road east of Pole Lane Road. 50 calibre machine gun ammunition was built here. Also located here were cement tunnels with big bunkers filled with sand in which ammunition was tested, firing every fifth shell they made.
13. F-6 - located just west of F-5, an Artillery Fuze Primer Load Line.
14. F-7 - located across from F-5 and F-6, Minor Calibre Fuze Load Line.
15. F-8 - located east of F-7, Minor Calibre Fuze Load Line.
16. F-9 - located at the end of New Road and Linn-Hipsher Road. It was never completed.
17. SHIPPING PLATFORM - located west of Likens Chapel on Pole Lane Road — also one was located west of the Magazine Area.
18. U.S. RUBBER SHIPPING PLATFORM - located near the corner of Pole Lane and Williamsport Roads.
19. MAIN FIRE AND POLICE STATIONS - located corner of Victory and Linn-Hipsher Roads. The sub-fire stations were located:
  - #1 - Likens and Victory Roads.
  - #2 - Likens and New Roads.
  - #3 - Linn-Hipsher - between Pole Lane and New Roads.
20. MAGAZINE AREA - stored ammunition. Located on Pole Lane Road where Grandview Estates is located.
21. RUNWAY for planes made with iron grid (concealed) located north of the present Warner Warehouses on Likens Road and south of the Magazine Area.
22. PRISONER-OF-WAR BARRACKS - six barracks located north of the Administration buildings.
23. PISTOL TARGET PRACTICE RANGE - located near the Guard House east of the Administration Buildings.
24. EMERGENCY WATER TANK AND WATER RESERVOIR - located east side of Pole Lane Road, first drive north of Line F-4.
25. MAIN GUARD HOUSES.
  - 1) Corner Likens and Victory Roads.
  - 2) Williamsport and Victory Roads.
26. WAREHOUSES - located on Likens Road.
  - 1) The 838th Army Air Force Warehouse - storage for British and American parts for planes.
  - 2) The 831st Army Air Force Special Depot, (with headquarters in Shelby, Ohio)
27. BURNING FIELD - located on Lucas Road near Linn-Hipsher Road.

## APPENDIX 5, Inspection Department Personnel

### Placement of Personnel

SCIOTO ORDNANCE PLANT  
Marion, Ohio

Inspection Department Bulletin  
No. 2

February 1, 1943

SUBJECT: Placement of Personnel - Ordnance Production Inspection Department.

To: All Ordnance Inspectors

I. The following assignments are effective as of February 1, 1943.

A. Office.

1. Production Control Section	Mr. F. F. DeRoche
a. Production Planning	Miss Henri Barnhart
b. Drawings & Specifications	Miss Lula Spohn
2. Administration	Mr. Irving Schulman
3. Incoming Inspection	Mrs. Pearl Brewer
	Miss Leona Feasel
4. Chemical Laboratory	Mr. Oscar Woolfolk
5. Gage Laboratory	Mr. Jesse McDowell

B. Line F-1, Bomb Fuze Load Line

1. Head Inspector	Mr. John M. Holloway
2. Inspector	Mr. Elmo Wood
3. "	Miss Esther Schrote
4. "	Mr. Paul R. Hughes

C. Line F-4, Artillery Fuze Load Line

1. Head Inspector	Mr. Reinhold Jaske
2. Inspector	Mr. Ernest E. Drumm
3. "	Miss Virginia Creasap
4. "	Mrs. Isabel Kyle

D. Line F-6, Artillery Fuze Primer Load Line

1. Head Inspector	Mr. Bethel R. Hurst
2. Inspector	Mr. Howard E. Bauer
3. "	Mrs. Reva D. Ringle
4. "	Miss Patricia McNally

E. Line F-7, Minor Caliber Fuze Load Line

1. Head Inspector	Mr. Charles Bausinger
2. Inspector	Mr. Edwin B. Ingler
3. "	Miss Imogene Schrote
4. "	Miss Mary J. Rider

F. Line B-1, Booster Load Line

1. Head Inspector	Mr. Ralph Trachsel
2. Inspector	Mr. Robert J. Stair
3. "	Miss Helen Talmadge
4. "	Mrs. Elsie W. Hinkle

II. Until all lines are opened temporary assignments of Inspectors will be made by this office.

For the Army Inspector of Ordnance:

*Lloyd R. Olson*  
Lloyd R. Olson  
Chief Inspector

rms

Courtesy of Mary J. Rider Jordan

## APPENDIX 6 MED Briefing

The following documents are supplied by J. Arthur Hamilton,  
Col. USA Ret.

(MED Briefing for Maj Gen Itschner's Visit on 13 February 1957)

### Excerpts from

MARION ENGINEER DEPOT BRIEFING FOR MAJ GEN ITSCHNER'S VISIT ON 13 FEB 1957

#### 1. General Operations.

a. Marion Engineer Depot has the largest concentration of Engineer supplies in the United States, either on a dollar or a tonnage basis. It has Engineer supplies of 30% more tonnage and 32% more value than Granite City, 300% more tonnage and 30% more value than Engineer Section, Columbus Depot, and 35% more tonnage and 23% more value than Engineer Section, Sharpe Depot. (Based on latest available consolidated FIA reports.)

b. Marion Engineer Depot has only about 65 acres of land, of which about 100 acres are outleased. It has a total of 99 structures, of which 6 are warehouses and 4 sheds. Twenty-five of the structures are outside of the depot security fence because of the remote officers' housing area and pumping stations on the long water and sewage systems. There are about 20 miles of railroad track, about two million square feet of covered storage and three million square feet of improved open storage area. Because the land is flat, the drainage is poor and open area is of no value for storage of heavy equipment unless it is stabilized and the surface is sealed.

c. The approved budget for FY 1957 was about nine million as compared to about eight million in FY 1956. Obligations at the end of the first half of the FY were 47.9% of the approved annual funding program. It should be noted that about five of the nine million dollars are spent for salaries and wages. Therefore, no major reduction in funding can be accomplished in the third or fourth quarters. The strength of the depot has been relatively constant for about two years. The increase in the last half of FY 55 was caused by the assignment of the repair parts mission.

d. Monthly operating cost follows personnel strength fairly closely. Contract costs have become appreciable in the past 12 months. A June peak of overtime was caused by MDAP shipments and a November peak by Swaggerstick shipments.

e. Minor injuries in CY 56 amounted to 384, which was well below our forecast of 500 and below the CY 55 record of 538. Lost-time injuries amounted to 8 in CY 56 as compared to 16 in CY 55.

f. "Line items shipped" reached a peak slightly over 3,000 a month in August 1955 and has been dropping off gradually. This fiscal year shipments have averaged about 2,000 lines per month, of which 85 to 90 per cent was repair parts. On a tonnage basis the average has been about 2,000 tons per month shipped. A peak in August 1955 was caused by Operation Noah, in June 1956 by MDAP and November 1956 by Swaggerstick. The cost per ton shipped averages about \$15, general Engineer costing about \$11 per ton and repair parts about \$55 per ton.

g. "Tonnage received" averages about 1,200 tons per month, excluding a peak in the last two quarters of FY 55 when about 18,000 tons of repair parts were received from Columbus Depot. Cost per ton

received is about \$7, general Engineer costing about \$4 per ton and repair parts about \$27 per ton.

#### Master Plan

a. Marion Engineer Depot was designated a permanent installation in 1954. The master plan was submitted to OCE and approved in 1955. In essence it contemplated replacement of existing temporary facilities with similar permanent facilities. Further study has revealed that additional engineering was required for both storm and sanitary sewer systems. This is being accomplished by Huntington District Engineer.

b. The complete program for MED is estimated to cost about \$11,500,000, including replacement of the five original warehouses. A few of the projects have been postponed too long.

(1) A small project costing about \$25,000 is required to extend the sanitary sewage system to pick up sewage from three buildings. At present, the effluent from septic tanks flows into the storm drainage system in violation of the laws of the State of Ohio. Informal advice indicates that the project was eliminated from the FY 59 MCA program by cuts at Department of Defense level. Action is under way to accomplish the work in the current R & U program.

(2) Replacement of family quarters was in the FY 56 MCA program but has been postponed several times and is now out of the FY 59 program. The existing quarters are located on a 7-acre plot of ground about 4 miles from MED and completely surrounded by property of the State of Ohio. Adjacent to the quarters is the fence of Marion Correctional Institution, which now houses 1,000 prisoners and is being expanded to take 1,500. Recently, an escaped prisoner is alleged to have attacked a woman in a house located less than a half mile from the quarters. Construction has been started on a large pig sty adjacent to the north property line of the quarters area. Strong action is recommended to have the quarters project included in the FY 58 or FY 59 MCA program.

(3) A portion of the Organizational and Field Maintenance Branch operated in two old CCC buildings which are beyond economical repair. When permanent facilities were eliminated from the FY 58 MCA program action was initiated to provide temporary facilities by means of a R & U project. It will be submitted to OCE for approval during the current quarter.

#### 4. Sanitary Sewer System

a. The MED sanitary sewage system is unique in that MED must budget for sewage service for the prisoners of the State of Ohio housed in Marion Correctional Institution. An increase in prisoners means an increase in sewage costs for MED regardless of program, budget or conservation letters. Furthermore, the costs are reimbursed to the Treasurer of the United States and not recovered by MED or the Corps of Engineers.

b. Sewage from MED is pumped under pressure through a transmission system built by the Army for the former Scioto Ordnance property for their penal institution. Since MED took over the sewage system in order to have service, the sewage for Marion Correctional Institution is resold under a utility sales contract.

c. About six months ago, a realtor purchased the former Scioto Ordnance magazine area and announced his intention to build 1,000 houses. It is understood that he, accompanied by Mr. [Robert] White of a local bank and Congressman Jackson E. Betts, discussed the matter

of sewage service with R & U Division, OCE. MED has had no success in discussions with city officials on the possibility of sale or lease. Provision of sewage service by MED to individual properties would create serious administrative problems as well as cause further increases in operating costs that could not be recovered at installation level.

d. By letter dated 25 July 1956, file ENGUC, subject, "Disposal of Off-post Sewer Lines at Marion Engineer Depot to the City of Marion, Ohio," advice was received that:

(1) Legal Division, OCE, had been requested to investigate the effect of existing sewer contract provisions and the possibility of amending the existing sewer contract with the City of Marion to transfer to the City, without a sale, of off-post sewer lines.

(2) MED would be advised of the results of Legal Division's investigation.

MED has had no information as to the results of investigation by Legal Division. As the building construction season approaches, action on some front becomes more critical. Housing is critical in Marion and Whirlpool-Seeger Corporation has just announced a \$4,600,000 expansion of their plant.

5. Industrial Equipment Reserve Program. In January 1956, MED began a directed 5-year program of testing of machine tools stored at Marion as the Corps of Engineers' industrial equipment reserve. Test patterns were made for each machine tool to determine the tolerances to which it would work. MED programmed \$159,500 for this work in FY 57 but only \$98,000 was provided. Consequently, it was necessary to suspend the work at the end of the second quarter. Continuation of the testing program is strongly recommended.

6. Transportation.

a. Difficulty has been encountered in obtaining rail cars when abnormal shipping is involved....

b. Availability of commercial trucks has been the opposite of rail cars in that no problem has been encountered in obtaining trucks when truck shipment is authorized.

c. MASS shipments from MED to the air terminal are handled within authorized time limits by Railway Express.

7. LOX Maintenance Contract with Herrick L. Johnston Company.

a. There are nine 7 1/2-ton liquid oxygen trailers which were manufactured by the Hofman Laboratories, New. Jersey....

b. The deficiencies in the trailers were essentially poor pump transfer control, inability to hold vacuum between inner and outer shells, leaking piping, over design of piping and crude workmanship....

8. Items on Which Action by OCE is Recommended.

a. Shipment of substantial backlog of unserviceable repairable equipment into MED.

b. Inclusion of family housing for MED in the earliest possible construction program.

c. Provision of legal advice on disposition of the MED off-post sewer system.

d. Provision of funds for reviving the testing of industrial equipment reserve.

OH. 45A-3

OFFICIAL USE ONLYJanuary 22, 1948COPY NO. 16ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSIONDECISION ON AEC 15  
SITE SELECTION - MONSANTO UNIT VINote by the Secretary

At its meeting on January 21, 1948, the Commission approved the recommendations of AEC 15.

ROY B. SNAPP

Secretary

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January 19, 1948

AEC 15

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ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

SITE SELECTION - MONSANTO UNIT VI

Note by the Secretary

1. The attached document was prepared by the Director of Production and is submitted by the General Manager for the consideration of the Commission during the week of January 19, 1948.

2. A document of this same title, which included a recommendation for the Jefferson Proving Ground as the site, was approved by the Commission on November 14, 1947 and the letter to the Chief of Engineers, attached as Appendix "A" to that document, was sent November 20, 1947.

3. On December 11 at a meeting between the representatives of the Division of Production and the Chief of Ordnance it was determined that the Jefferson Proving Ground was not available.

4. The recommendation in the attached document is the result of further investigation of other suitable sites.

ROY B. SNAPP

Secretary

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